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NATIONAL BISCUIT COMPANY

The IRON TRAIL

By
REX BEACH

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SYNOPSIS

Murray O'Neil, railroad builder, on his way to Alaska, is a passenger on the Nebraska. The ship runs aground. O'Neil helps Captain Johnny Brennan to quell a panic among the passengers.

As the ship settles O'Neil is attracted by a beautiful girl, and he plunges overboard with her. They are picked up by Captain Brennan. She proves to be Natalie Gerard, whose mother is the friend of Curtis Gordon, O'Neil's unscrupulous business rival.

O'Neil and Natalie journey to Hope together. She tells him of her mother and Gordon. When they arrive at Hope Gordon meets them.

O'Neil is impressed with the magnificence of his rival, but is sure his plans are unshaken. Tom Slater quits Gordon for O'Neil. They go to Cortez in time to save Dan Appleton in a crooked card game.

Appleton, an engineer, had worked for Gordon. He casts his fortunes with O'Neil. O'Neil leads him to a wild country, convinced he can build a railroad up the Salmon river.

Eliza Appleton is sent to Omar to expose the men who are trying to snatch control of an empire. She meets her brother and Natalie. Dan is worried over a possible newspaper attack by Eliza on O'Neil.

O'Neil meets his crew in Seattle, where a newspaper woman gets on the phone. She proves to be Dan Appleton's sister. O'Neil tells her his plans, but not for publication.

There's a scene when Curtis Gordon asks Gloria to be hostess to Miss Golden. Gloria says Miss Golden isn't a fit person to meet Natalie. Gordon says she has money and he needs her in his schemes.

In her extremity Mrs. Gerard listens to Natalie's plea to go to the Irish prince. O'Neil finds places for them in his new hotel. Gordon, thoroughly enraged, plans to cripple O'Neil.

Dan tells his sister he's desperately in love with Natalie and asks her to win O'Neil, as he considers him a rival. Dan goes out with a car of dynamite and holds a canyon threatened by Gordon's men.

O'Neil takes the girls on a trip to Jackson Glacier. He decides to make a perilous voyage in a skiff down the Salmon river. Eliza, despite his pleadings, accompanies him.

Dan Appleton accepts O'Neil's offer of \$1000 to the man who'll cut a cable in the work done by Gordon. After cutting the cable, Appleton is set upon by a crowd of Gordon's men, but is rescued by O'Neil's men.

"You read your novel and talk to Mr. Trevor when he comes back. He knows we're to blame for this storm, so you must be able to him. I can't." She clad herself in raincoat, and waders and boots and hurried out. Walking was difficult enough, even in the shelter of the village, but not until she had emerged upon the beach did she meet the full strength of the gale. Here it wrung her garments about her limbs until she could scarcely move. The rain came horizontally and blinded her. The wind fairly snatched her breath away and oppressed her lungs like a heavy weight. She shuddered herself as best she could, and by clinging to stationary objects and watching her chance she managed to work her way upward. At last she caught sight of O'Neil standing high above the surf, facing the wind defiantly, as if daring it to unfoot him. He saw her and came in answer to her signal. But to breast that wind was like stemming a rushing torrent, and when he reached her side he was panting.

"Child, what are you doing here?" he demanded.

"I couldn't wait any longer," she shouted back. "You've been out since daylight. You must be wet through."

He nodded. "I lay awake all night listening. So did Trevor. He's beginning to worry already."

"Already? If the breakwater stands this—"

"The storm hasn't half started. Come! We'll watch it together." He took her hand, and they lunged into the gale, battling their way back to his point of vantage. He paused at length and, with his arm about her, pointed to the milk white chaos which marked Trevor's handiwork. The rain pelted against their faces and streamed from their slickers.

After a long time he spoke. "See! It's coming up," he said.

She felt no increase in the wind, but she noted that particles of sand and tiny pebbles from the beach were flying with the salt raindrops. Her muscles began to tremble from the constant effort at resistance, and she was relieved when Murray looked about for a place of refuge. She pointed to a pile of bridge timbers, but he shook his head.

"They'll go flying if this keeps up," he dragged her into the shelter of a little knoll. Here the blasts struck them with diminished force, the roaring in their ears grew less, and the labor of breathing was easier.

High up beyond reach of the surf a dory had been dragged and left bottom up. Under this the wind found a finger hold and sent it flying.

Even where the man and the woman crouched the wind harried them like a bound pack, but by clinging to the branches of a gnarled juniper bush they held their position and let the spray whine over their heads.

"Farther west I've seen houses chained to the earth with ships' cables," he shouted in her ear. "To think of building a harbor in a place like this!"

"I prayed for you last night. I prayed for the wind to come," said the girl after a time.

O'Neil looked at her, curiously startled; then he looked out at the sea once more. All in a moment he realized that Eliza was beautiful and that she had a heart. It seemed wonderful that she should be interested in his fortunes. He was a lonely man. Beneath his open friendliness lay a deep reserve. A curiously warm feeling of gratitude flamed through him now, and he silently blessed her for

bearing him company in the deciding hour of his life.

Noon came, and still the two crouched in their half shelter, drenched, chilled, stiff with exposure, watching Kyak bay lash itself into a boiling smother. The light grew dim; night was settling. The air seemed full of screaming furies. Then O'Neil noticed bits of driftwood racing in upon the billows, and he rose with a loud cry. "It's breaking up!" he shouted. "It's breaking up!"

Eliza lifted herself and clung to him, but she could see nothing except a misty confusion. In a few moments the darkness came thicker. Splintered pilings, huge square bawn timbers with fragments of twisted iron or broken bolts came floating into sight. A confusion of wreckage began to clutter the shore, and into it the sea churned.

The spindrift tore asunder at length, and the watchers caught a brief glimpse of the tumbling ocean. The breakwater was gone. Over the place where it had stood the billows raced unhindered.

"Poor Trevor!" said O'Neil. "Poor Trevor! He did his best, but he didn't know." He looked down to find Eliza crying. "What's this? I've kept you here too long!"

"No, no! I'm just glad—so glad! Don't you understand?"

"I'll take you back. I must get ready to leave."

"Leave? Where?"

"For New York! I've made my fight, and I've won." His eyes knitted feverishly. "I've won in spite of them all. I hold the key to a kingdom. It's mine—mine! I hold the gateway to an empire, and those who pass through must pay." The girl had never seen such fierce triumph in a face. "I saw it in a dream, only it was more than a dream." The wind snatched O'Neil's words from his lips, but he ran on: "I saw a deserted fishing village become a thriving city. I saw the glaciers part to let pass a great traffic in men and merchandise. I saw the unpeopled north grow into a land of homes, of farms, of mining camps, where people lived and bred children. I heard the mountain passes echo to steam whistles and the whirl of flying wheels. It was a wonderful vision that I saw, but my eyes were true. They called me a fool, and it took the sea and the hurricane to show them I was right." He paused.

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It means that NEW quality, in a cigarette, that does for your smoking exactly what a drink of cold water does for your thirst!

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This is new enjoyment for a cigarette to give. It is something that no cigarette, except Chesterfields, can give you—regardless of price.

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Because no cigarette maker can copy the Chesterfield blend!

Try Chesterfields—today!

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Chesterfield CIGARETTES

*No Wonder They Satisfy!

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They SATISFY!

—and yet they're MILD

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1000 MORE 1000